

VA's Oyster EIS Public Scoping Meeting

January 28, 2004

(Summary prepared by Tom O'Connell, MD DNR, Fisheries Service)

Attendance: There were approximately 60 people in attendance of which about 20 were governmental employees, and of the 40 remaining, approximately 25% were industry folks, 25% college students, and 50% interested citizens.

Summary: The agenda included a 20 minute presentation on the status of the resource and restoration efforts, states' proposal and schedule, preliminary list of alternatives, and EIS process. Then the group was divided into five smaller break-out groups that were facilitated. Each break-out group was given one hour to provide comments on the proposal, alternatives, schedule and/or issues of concern. Individuals were then given 5 "sticky dots" and asked to place them on the top priorities identified within their group. The facilitators then presented the top five priorities of each break-out group to the entire group. The meeting format was well received by those at the meeting.

Top 5 Priorities (in priority order) for Each Break-Out Group:

Group 1: (top 4 as there was a five way tie for the 5th priority)

- EIS needs to be completed within 1 year.
- CBP STAC research recommendations and guidelines should be the framework in which research is conducted for the EIS.
- Ensure genetic variability is maintain in both native and non-native populations (hatchery efforts).
- Determine the effect of low DO on restoring oysters.

Group 2:

- Identify the preferred alternative utilize all resources to implement it.
- Consider economics of industry.
- Conduct research on Bonamia.
- Define acceptable level of risk.
- Utilize available research, don't re-invent the wheel.

Group 3:

- Expand non-native aquaculture while continuing native restoration.
- Identify what will be done if problems occur with non-native introduction.
- Determine if non-natives will displace native oyster.
- Expand disease resistance research.
- Proposed schedule may not be realistic, and should be open-ended.

Group 4:

- EIS needs to be completed within 1 year, so that C.a. can be introduced in Spring 2005.
- NAS proposed timeframe of 5 years to prepare an ecological risk assessment is too long.
- Assess affect of declining oyster population on Bay water quality.

- Need to clarify and educate the public on Oregon stock of C.a., and that this stock is not coming from foreign waters.
- Determine what safeguards can be implemented if C.a. starts outcompeting C.v.

Group 5:

- Need to evaluate the ecological ramifications of introducing C.a.
- Need quantitative assessment on status of native sanctuary program.
- Need to expand native sanctuary program.
- Follow through on native restoration plan with adequate funding.
- Ensure integrity of native oyster population.